MR. I. C. CHACKO: Yes.

Road from Perisseri to Cheriyanadu (Ala trace).

274. ✻ MR. C. K. SANKARA PILLAI: Will the Government be pleased to state:

(*a*) whether any representation had been received as to the condition of the road from Perisseri to Cheriyanadu (Ala trace) that starts from 9/2 Mavelikara-Chengannur Road and meets at 2/4 Kodukulanji Road;

(*b*) whether it is fit for traffic; and

(*c*) whether any work has been commenced on this road?

MR. I. C. CHACKO: (*a*) Yes, with regard to a portion of the road.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) The Uthinkuzhi bridge has recently been reconstructed.

Toddy and arrack shops auctioned in 1119.

275. ✻ MR. A. P. UDAYABHANU (*Karunagapalli* cum *Kartikapalli*): Will the Government be pleased to state:

(*a*) the number of (i) toddy shops and (ii) arrack shops auctioned in 1119;

(*b*) the amount for which (i) toddy shops and (ii) arrack shops were auctioned out in 1119; and

(*c*) the number of gallons of arrack consumed in 1119 and the number of gallons of toddy in the same year?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN (*Excise Commissioner*): (*a*) (i) 1085
(ii) 418

(*b*) (i) Rs. 28,34,865
(ii) Rs. 14,12,515

(*c*) The number of gallons of arrack consumed in 1119 was 3,31,507 bulk gallons. The number of gallons of toddy consumed in 1119 was about 1,25,38,222 gallons.

MR. A. P. UDAYABHANU: May I know whether these figures show a marked increase in the spread of drink?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: Yes, Sir, there is a marked increase in the consumption of arrack.

MR. A. P. UDAYABHANU: May I know whether the Excise Commissioner has taken any effective step to prevent the spread of drink?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: Yes, Sir, I have taken control measures. But this is a sign of the times. I must say that the consumption here compares very well with the consumption in the adjoining districts of British India and the State of Cochin.

MR. K. A. MATHEW: May I know what steps the Excise Department has taken to prevent the spread of this evil?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: I would refer the honourable member to the Administration Report where mention is made about the action taken against illicit activities like distillation. There is a quota system under which I distribute available arrack to the various licencees of arrack shops in the State, as supply is now insufficient.

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MR. K. A. MATHEW: When there is an increase in the consumption, what does the honourable member mean when he says that the department has introduced control measures for the consumption of liquor?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: The Excise Department has no rule or Act under which it can check the consumption of the liquor by the people. If one wants to drink, we give him controlled drink rather than permit him to resort to illicit drinks—including, tapping and distillation.

RAJYASEVANIRATA S. CHATTANATHA KARAYALAR (*Pattanapuram* cum *Shencotta*): May I know how the consumption of toddy is estimated in gallons?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: It is a rough estimate. We know what a tree would yield. Calculating on this basis we have arrived at the gallonage figures.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: May I know the average rate of consumption in Travancore and in Tinnevelly?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: I have not got the figures with me now. If the honourable member will kindly come to me I shall give him figures.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: I put the question on the basis that it is higher in Travancore.

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: I can say that it is higher in Tinnevelly.

MR. P. S. NATARAJA PILLAI: Without knowing the figures, how can you say that it is higher in British India?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: I can say from memory that the figures are higher, there, but I don't have figures with me here.

MR. K. A. MATHEW: Does the honourable member know that it is not convincing when he is not prepared to give us the figures?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: Without the actual figures which I do not have now I can say that it is higher in British India. All these figures were being published in the news papers. I have been following these papers. If the honourable members have been also reading these they would have known it. I do not have the figures with me just now, but I can supply it to honourable members if they go to my office.

MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI: May I know whether it is a declared policy of the Government to stop this evil?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: No, Sir.

PRESIDENT: Definitely it is not.

The policy of the Government, I may say at once, is to regulate and make the use of drink more and more difficult for persons and to raise the rates to such an extent that all incentives are robbed of their value. For that purpose, Government have consistently increased the issue price of liquor. Government are so thoroughly convinced that absolute prohibition is impossible in the country at large especially in Travancore with its large numbers of cocoanuts, palmyra, and 'thenpanai' trees, that they think that the system of total prohibition is bound to fail and will only result in illicit distillation on a large scale. The Government's policy is, therefore, not one of total prohibition, at all events, for the present.

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MR. K. K. CHELLAPPAN PILLAI: If it is to make prohibitive the consumption of toddy and liquor, is not the increase of duty and price only 19%, while the prices of commodities have gone about 200 times?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: In regard to this commodity there is also duty to be added besides the other normal cost of production.

Price of Sugar.

276. *MR. E. K. MADHAVAN (*Kunnatnad* cum *Parur*): Will the Government be pleased to state:

(*a*) the minimum price fixed for a pound of sugar; and

(*b*) does the price vary in different taluks and if so, the prices fixed for Parur and Kunnatnad taluks?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: (*a*) No minimum price has been fixed for sugar.

(*b*) Yes. The present price in the Parur taluk is annas four and six pies a pound, and that in Kunnatnad taluk annas four and three pies a pound.

MR. E. K. MADHAVAN: May I know the cause for the disparity in prices in the two taluks?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: The price of each consignment will depend upon the freight, cost of transport, etc. These consignments were received either at Quilon, or at Alleppey, and the distance from the place of supply would determine the cost of transport, and retail price would differ as it is on the cost of transport that the retail price would depend, the margin of profit being the same in all taluks.

MR. E. K. MADHAVAN: Will the difference come to 3 pies per pound?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: It seems to be due to the difference in the price of the commodity concerned. We allot certain consignments to certain taluks and price may differ on account of transport charge etc., as the same consignment is not sent to all taluks.

Market rates for Jaffna tobacco.

277. *MR. T. T. KESAVAN SASTRI (*Nominated*): Will the Government be pleased to state the respective market rates for Jaffna tobacco in the months of Medom and Idavam and also in Mithunam and Karkatakam 1119?

MR. P. G. NARAYANAN UNNITHAN: A *statement showing the market rates at some of the principal stations is laid on the table.

New P. W. D. Works in the Alwaye Division.

278. *MR. K. R. NARAYANAN (*Nominated*): With regard to new works in the Alwaye Division of the Public Works Department, will the Government be pleased to state:

(*a*) the works provided for in the Budget for each taluk; and

(*b*) the works started in each taluk?

MR. I. C. CHACKO: (*a*) & (*b*) A statement furnishing the information is placed on the Secretary's table.

*Vide Appendix III, Page 915.

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